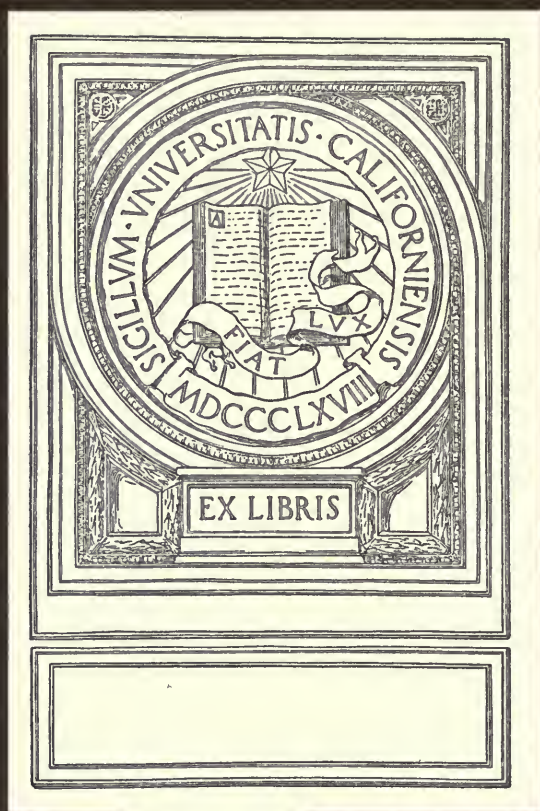


Parsons, T.W.

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FOR THE
DEDICATION OF THE BUNKER HILL
TABLETS.

I.

Under the golden dome where laws are made,
The stones yet stand that once around the base
Rose, of the ancient column in that place;

And on those graven tablets is displayed
A record of the mighty train

Of great events that, following fast
Through seven long years of watchings and fears,
Throes, and unutterable strain,

In God's ripe season led at last
Our land to glory through that vale of tears.

II.

And this, moreover, the stones have said:
While from this eminence you survey

Scenes of luxury, gardens of wealth,
Homes of laborious industry and health,
Tilth and orchard, uplands, plain,
And clovered meadows reaching far away,
With halls of learning hid in elmy bowers

Your supereminent domain!
Whate'er of republics may have been
Spoken aforetime, the imputed sin
Of thanklessness must not be ours.

III.

From the golden dome where laws are made
There went a mandate forth:

On yonder hallowed mount to the north
Let the best men in building skilled
A tower of rocks to the high heavens build,
To stand at once a monument and shrine,
A pillar, in everlasting sign,
Like that which Hercules of yore
Set on the Gaditanian shore,

Crying to tyrants, Come no more!
And the fire in the cresset that flamed of old,
Beaconing the mariners up Boston bay,

Shall burn forever from this new tower,
Like a ruling star of benignant ray
For every people to behold, —
A watch-fire in the purple west,
Steadfast and strong, for all the oppressed
To fly to from tyrannic power.

IV.

New England's air was never tainted long
With any tyranny; the prairie-winds
Breathed from the illimitable West
Into those English hearts and minds
A new-born sense of space that made more strong
A vigour chafed for centuries by the sea,
And for high ventures nerved each daring breast.
Our Fathers always had been free.
Those men who Freedom's battle fought,
Holding all kings but One in scorn,
Though with a mighty price they bought
Your freedom, were free born;
And Carolina's and Virginia's blood
Tempered to like disdain of shackled thought,
Beat with one pulse, when Liberty's glad morn
Alike to North and South broke o'er the Atlantic flood.

V.

Why should the Muse on dreadful details dwell,
To make a calendar of her lyre?
Is it a story of no renown —
The redoubt, the frigates, the blazing town,
Fronting the Falcon's fire;
How the regulars rushed and the yeomen fell,
Butts and bayonets plying as well;
Rolled and trod in the crimson mire
Of the dust and blood beneath?
Close quarters then! for a captain cries, —
As the troops marched up, — "Let them come nigher!
Hold till you mark the whites of their eyes,
And the gleam of their British teeth."
Ah! many felt, as the bullets flew,
We fight for Englishmen in fighting you.

VI.

On from that dread to this triumphal June,
And now while natures are all in tune,
That children hereafter may come to spell
Prescott and Warren and all who fell,
Hard by, on that bitter afternoon,

Bearing on History's page so proud a part,
We hang these bronzes on our country's heart.

Not for the splendour of the fight,
Not for the number of the slain,
Not for the day's defeat and flight,
But for the final crowning of the right,
And mankind's measureless gain.
This other commonwealth of kings,
Born here on Bunker's height,
Have fluttered their flag of stars,
Like a labarum of light,
Beyond the Tiber, by Peter's throne,
Beyond the hill of Mars,
As those elder freemen, through every zone
Carried their eagles on outspread wings
And blazoned S. P. Q. Rs.

VII.

Say then, O poet! when sages
Shall anew the tale relate,
Not for a thousand ages
Was a little battle so great;
Yea, write, besides, on your pages,
With an adamant pen,
Not for a million ages
May such battle be fought again.

VIII.

Remembering what our statesman said,
" *That the blood of your fathers may not have been shed*
For humankind *in vain*," *
Up with your tablets to grace the dead!
And while you hang them, let great London hear
Little Boston's exultations;
Let all nations far and near;
Let sacred Italy and Spain,
Norway, Denmark, and the men
We love in Germany, and France
Rejoice at this day's doings. Then
" *Advance ye future generations*," *
And lead the world's advance!

T. W. PARSONS.

* Words of Webster.

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